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ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD, OTTAWA PASSENGER STATION
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Columbus Street between East Marquette
and East Joliet streets
Ottawa
LaSalle County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-62

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD, OTTAWA PASSENGER STATION
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor

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Location: I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor
East side of Columbus Street between
East Marquette and East Joliet streets
Ottawa, LaSalle County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E.346070 N.4579540
Quad: Ottawa

Date of Construction: ca. 1910

Builder: Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad

Present Owner: CSX

Present Use: Offices

Significance: This passenger station, built for the
Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad,
is an excellent example of early
twentieth century railroad architecture.

Project Information: The Illinois and Michigan Canal was
designated a National Heritage Corridor
in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER
embarked on an extensive inventory and
documentation project of the 100 mile-
long corridor. Field work for this
project was concluded in 1988. Final
editing of the documentation was
completed in 1992.

Historian: Gray Fitzsimons, 1985.

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The original Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot in Ottawa was built in the 1850s. Of wood-frame construction, this depot was replaced in 1888 with a one-story brick structure. Around 1910 the Rock Island Railroad constructed a new depot. As with other early twentieth-century Rock Island buildings, the Ottawa depot contained a number of decorative elements, including cast stone sills and a port cochere supported by a series of brick arches. The building also features a two-story turret with a conical roof. When rail service was discontinued in the 1970s the depot was adapted to serve as offices for CSX, the current owners of this section of the Rock Island line.

The one-story depot measures 60' x 25'. Its exterior is roughly textured red-and-tan brick halfway up the building and tan-brick from mid-height to the roof. A port cochere extends along the south facade and joins with the main hipped roof. The roofs are covered with asphalt shingles and the projecting eaves are supported by ornamental wooden brackets. The two-story turret has a wooden exterior with wooden dentils. The symmetrical fenestration has single one-over-one-light, wood, double-hung, sash windows flanked by long, narrow, fixed one-light windows. The second story of the turret has narrow, one-over-one light, wood, double-hung, sash windows. The windows have cast-stone sills; decorative jack-arch lintels span a number of the window openings. Originally the baggage room, located to the east of the passenger depot, was a separate building. At an unknown date, probably in the 1950s, the room was connected to the depot by a brick infill addition. Brick pavers, which form the sidewalks and platform, extend from the depot to the railroad tracks.

SOURCES:

Sanborn Map Co., Ottawa, LaSalle County, Illinois (New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1888, 1891, 1898, 1913, 1925).

Ottawa, Old and New: A Complete History of Ottawa, Illinois, 1823-1914 (Ottawa, IL: The Republican Times, 1912-1914, reprinted by Bireline Publishing Co., Newell, Iowa, 1984): 114, 152.